February, 2006. Therefore, rate of increase of employment since the launching of NREGS is not available.

Linking of States with railways and airways

†4669. SHRI O.T. LEPCHA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the names of States of the country which are not linked with railway or airways till date since independence;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether any plan has been formulated by Government in this regard; and

(d) the details of effective steps being taken by Government to implement the plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) and (b) Railway network is spread throughout the country and passes through almost all the States except the following where the railway line does not exist on date:—

(i) Sikkim

(ii) Meghalaya

All States in the country have been air linked. Air connectivity to Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh are being provided through helicopter operations.

(c) and (d) A new rail line from New Azara to Byrnihat in the State of Meghalaya has been included in the Supplementary Demands for Grant 2006-07 in December, 2006 and on completion of the project, railway line in the State of Meghalaya will become available. A survey for new line from Sivok-Rangpo has been taken up for bringing Sikkim on the rail map of India. However, further consideration will be possible only after the survey report is submitted.

In respect of air transport services, Government has laid down Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDG) with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

different regions of the country. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability. In terms of RDG, all scheduled airlines are required to deploy at least 10% of the capacity deployed by them on trunk routes (i.e. Category-I routes), on the routes to North Eastern States, J&K, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep (Category -II routes). Airlines also have to deploy 50% of the capacity deployed on Category I routes on Category III routes (i.e. routes other than Category-I &I II routes).

Number of people Below Poverty Line

4670. SHRI P.J. KURIEN : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of people Below Poverty Line at the beginning of the Tenth Plan and the number as on today;

(b) the Eleventh Plan target of reducing the number of people Below Poverty Line; and

(c) the time -frame by which Government expect to bring all the people out of the BPL level, and the action plan in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Planning Commission estimates the incidence of poverty at national and state level from the large sample survey on household consumer expenditure conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) at an interval of approximately five years following the methodology contained in the Report of the Expert Group on Estimation of Proportion and Number of Poor (Lakdawala Committee). The two closest years for which poverty estimates around the beginning of the Tenth Plan and today are available relate to 1999-2000 and 2004-05. In 1999-2000, 260.25 million people were estimated to live below the poverty line. The poverty estimates in 2004-05 are based on URP consumption distribution (Uniform Recall Period consumption in which the consumer expenditure data for all the items are collected from 30-day recall period) and MRP consumption distribution (Mixed Recall Period consumption in which the consumer expenditure data for five non-food items, namely, clothing, footwear, durable goods, education and institutional medical expenses are collected from 365-day recall period and the consumption data for the remaining items are collected from